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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

I.

THOUGHT-TRANSFERRENCE.

I HAVE been reading Mr. Croffut's very interesting article upon "The Open Gate of Dreamland," in a recent number of *THE REVIEW*, and I notice that Mr. Croffut says that his result can be, in all cases, explained by the phenomenon of suggestion. He says: "If I face a responsive to the wall, I can have no effect upon him unless I speak to him"; and again: "The responsive must know what is wished." In regard to thought-transference and some other exhibitions he says: "My own experiments have not reached any of them, and, failing to do so, have suggested that they may all be delusions." It occurs to me that this deduction of Mr. Croffut's may be premature; that he has not met with the exhibitions named because they can only be developed by a different line of experimentation; and I beg to present an experience of my own as possibly a case in point.

The incident occurred to me in the summer of 1881, while passing a few weeks in a boarding-house devoted exclusively to women. I was convalescing from an illness which had been accompanied by great pain, and I was still very sensitive to light, sound, and, indeed, to all forms of irritation. One evening there were twenty or thirty of us together in the parlor, and in the dearth of interest frequent on such occasions, a woman who was considerably older and more experienced than the rest, suggested a game in which one of us, being blindfolded, was made to do something previously agreed upon by the company, the medium of communication being the operator's hands upon the subject's shoulders. The proposition interested me, from its assumption of power to communicate ideas by a method outside of my experience, and, others failing to do so, I offered myself as the subject. I expressed willingness to do whatever would be required of me, thus narrowing the problem down to simply the communication of the requirement to my mind. I said: "If you can in any way make me know what I am to do, I will do it." The game is not a new one, and is probably familiar to many readers.

Under the guidance of the hands on my back, I searched for lost articles, passed from one room to another, and performed a number of other feats. So far as I had expected anything, I had expected a picture or presentment of what I was to do, in such shape as to allow me to exercise my will and marshal my forces for its accomplishment; and I was prepared for considerable mental effort in grasping the idea which was to be projected into my mind. Nothing of the kind happened. No idea was given me. I proceeded blindly. I advanced very slowly, each step being taken simply in response to a loss of equilibrium. Apparently I first inclined in a certain direction, and then took a step to save myself from falling. I sat, I knelt, I reached out my hand in response to similar impulses. With my mind fully awake, but willingly passive, I was an automaton.

I am aware that similar exhibitions have been explained by conscious and unconscious suggestion conveyed through the hands of the operator, the weight of her body being the propelling power, and I would accept this explanation for my own case were it not for what followed. Finding me so docile, I suppose, it was deter-

mined to give me something more difficult to do. With the operator's hands upon my shoulders, I again successively felt the loss of equilibrium and advanced as before for a number of steps, when I stood upright without any further forward impulse. While wondering a little at this loss of the feeling of propulsion, I commenced to feel a contraction in the muscle around my mouth. In a few minutes the puckering of the lips became very marked; so much so as to suggest kissing. Upon this, I immediately said to myself: "If they require me to kiss any one, it will be a mistake, because that is something which I will not do." Instantly, however, I corrected myself for allowing my thoughts to wander, and said to myself: "I must forget this kissing or I will not be able to receive the impulse and do what is required of me." I then succeeded in putting the idea out of my mind and resumed my previously passive and receptive condition, but no further inclination came to me. Although the operator's hands were still upon my shoulders, I had no further loss of equilibrium, nor an impulse in any direction, and the experiment was declared to have failed. It was then told to me that I had been required to kiss one of the young ladies. I had advanced to her side, but had made no further response.

It will be seen that my experiment goes a step further than Mr. Croffut's experiments. Mr. Croffut must have the coöperation of the mind of his subject. In my experiment, the mind of the subject had nothing to do with the result. The contraction of the orbicularis oris preceded the idea of kissing and was the cause of its suggestion. The contraction of the orbicularis oris occurred while my mind was a blank. A second point of difference is the fact that hypnotism was not essential to the result; but simply a degree of passivity possible to any trained mind.

In reviewing this experiment, it might be premised that kissing is an exercise to which I have a repugnance. I never voluntarily kiss even my dearest friends. I was thus made to perform a muscular action repugnant to me, at a time when not the remotest suggestion of such an action was in my mind. That this motion, at least, could not have been instigated by propulsion through the operator's hands will be apparent. Any other mechanical explanation I cannot suggest. For my own part, I believe the occurrence to be in the line of proof that, under certain conditions, the muscles belonging to one body may be controlled by the mind belonging to another body, its own mind being passive in the matter. Nor should I be surprised to learn that such substitution is not rare. It seems to me that the mind of the well substitutes the mind of the sick again and again in the practice of all successful physicians. I can recall two cases of otherwise incoercible vomiting which were apparently controlled by such substitution. One of these was a case of pneumonia, with a very high temperature during several successive days, and absolute rejection of both medicine and food. The patient's condition was desperate. I remained with her for a night, and the tendency to vomit seemed to be inhibited by my keeping myself very much alert to the necessities of the case. Personal contact seemed to assist in this result. If I left her bedside for five minutes, the vomiting recommenced; while holding her hand appeared to strengthen my influence. In this treatment, I had at the time no theory as my guide, but simply followed an instinct in the matter. The patient was too much reduced for self-control. I did not address myself to her at all, but simply tried with all my might to do for her that which she was unable to do for herself. In another case of incoercible vomiting, I recall the same attitude of mind. The forlorn patient was not appealed to, but, as I left for the night, I said to the nurse: "If that woman vomits, your reputation will be nothing with me." The woman did not vomit. Dr. James R. Wood had a way of saying to his nurses, "That patient has got to get well," thus recognizing this same personal equation in his results.

It seems to me that the transference of thought or will belongs to a different order of phenomena from those described by Mr. Croffut; perhaps equally beneficial and not to be disproved because not to be arrived at by the same means. Mr. Croffut's reflections upon the medical profession I simply do not understand. In this city, at least, our leading neurologists are interested in this movement, many of them being members of the Society for Psychical Research. If by opposition he means disapproval of exhibitions in which intelligent beings are made to believe in the presence

of a seven-headed cow, and to comport themselves in a way which, in their saner moments, is calculated to cause them chagrin, the medical profession but voices the opinions and will have the support of all of the intelligent, self-respecting portion of our community.

SARAH E. POST, M. D.

II.

SOME NEWLY-DISCOVERED HEROES.

THE country has, these many years, been pretty well informed about "Daniel Boone and the hunters of Kentucky," and, indeed, the early history of none of the older States has been more thoroughly written than that of this heroic commonwealth. But neither Harrod, nor Logan, nor Boone planted the first American colony beyond the Alleghanies. That was done by James Robertson along the Watauga, in what is now Eastern Tennessee, in 1770, four years before Harrod settled Harrodsburg, and five before Boone built a fort at Boonesborough. But about these first pioneers the country knew next to nothing till so late as 1886, when the Appletons issued the first volume of James R. Gilmore's (Edmund Kirke's) series of southwestern histories.

This first volume, "The Rear-Guard of the Revolution," Mr. Gilmore prefaced with the bold statement that these Watauga settlers "thrice saved the country by thwarting the British plan to envelop and crush the southern colonies, and by turning the tide of the Revolution at King's Mountain," and, after the Revolutionary War, "frustrated the design of Spain to dismember and weaken the Union by causing the erection of a separate republic in the country between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi"; and he pronounced the three Watauga leaders—John Sevier, Isaac Shelby, and James Robertson—"characters worthy of the most heroic ages." These statements, if substantiated, would give these three unknown men an exalted place in our annals, and show Tennessee to have acted no inconsiderable part in achieving our independence; and we are bound to say that Mr. Gilmore seems to have substantiated them by the facts comprised in his three volumes, and thereby to have added a new and important chapter to American history.

But still the questions will arise, Why has no one else given us these facts, and why have they been so long buried under the dust of the past century? These questions are not yet answered, but, in Mr. Phelan's recent and well-written history of Tennessee, we have, from a native Tennessean, an indorsement of these facts and of Mr. Gilmore's estimate of the three Watauga leaders; and, moreover, Mr. Phelan fortifies his opinions by reference to a list of authorities which covers no less than sixteen closely-printed pages. Of John Sevier he says: "He was, in his sphere, a statesman of the first order; as a warrior, he was excelled by none who engaged in the same mode of warfare, and that he never lost a battle claims for him a high place among the great men of the world." "He is," says Mr. Phelan, "one of the heroes of our history; and he grows larger and more resplendent as he advances. He is the most brilliant military and civil figure this State has ever produced. Without him the history of Tennessee would, in many important respects, not be what it now is. He defined its boundaries, watched over and guarded its beginning, helped to form it, and exercised a decisive influence upon its development." "His claim to a higher order of ability is justified by his clear vision of the present needs of his people, and of the future requirements of the State, whose greatness he foresaw," and "his diplomacy and generalship hastened the settlement of Tennessee by a number of years which cannot be calculated." Mr. Phelan says, further, that Sevier's "enthusiasm, his personal daring, his resolute quickness, his knightly disposition, made him the idol of his soldiers and his neighbors. The grim mountaineers worshipped him with an extravagance of adoration. They loved him with a warm, almost intense, personal regard." "Sevier not only possessed great popularity; he deserved it. The basis of his character was laid in sincerity, in truth, and in honor. He was loved, because he had a loving heart. The gentle word, the quick sympathy, the open hand, the high purpose, the dauntless courage, the impetuosity, the win-